



COLUMBIA HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICY MANUAL

TITLE: INVENTORIED PROPERTY	GENERAL ORDER NUMBER: 1100
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The purpose of this General Order is to develop a uniform system and establish guidelines relative to the collection, storage, release, and disposal of property taken into custody by Columbia Heights Police Department personnel to ensure the security, accountability, and uninterrupted chain of custody.

1100:1 Property Inventory Sheet

1100:11 Property Inventory Sheet

A Property Inventory sheet shall accompany all property taken into custody. The person seizing the property completes the Property Inventory sheet. The Property Inventory sheet shall include:

- The name of the person inventorying the property.
- The date and time of inventory.
- The complete name, address, and phone number(s) from whom the property was obtained.
- The location where the property was obtained.
- The full name and date of birth of the suspect(s).
- The case number.
- The temporary storage location.
- A detailed description of the item inventoried to include:
 - Brand name
 - Model number
 - Serial number
 - Color
 - Any unique distinguishing characteristics or markings

- The Processing and Handling portion should be completed on all submitted sheets.

1100:12 Classifications

All property taken into custody shall be classified as “evidence,” “found”, “forfeiture”, or “other.” The property classifications are defined as:

- **Evidence:** Property that is or may be related to a crime.
- **Found:** Property that is non-evidentiary in nature that has been determined to be lost and/or abandon, and the owner is not known.
 - A finder (a person other than a City of Columbia Heights employee) may claim found property. The Department personnel taking custody of the found property that the finder wishes to claim is responsible for obtaining the complete name, address, and phone number of the finder, as well as the signature of the finder on the Property Inventory sheet.
 - All property taken into custody by Columbia Heights Police Department

personnel as a result of their official duties and responsibilities, shall be inventoried into the control of the Columbia Heights Police Department as soon as practical and prior to the end of their shift. The shift supervisor shall approve or deny any exception to this procedure. All claims shall be made at the time the property is reported found to the police department.

- **Forfeiture:** Property seized that the Columbia Heights Police Department may attempt to forfeit from the owner such as cash and/or vehicles.
- **Other:** Property that has no evidentiary value, the identity of the owner is known and the property is being held for safe keeping, or the identity of the owner is unknown and the property has no value and can be destroyed immediately.

1100:13 Multiple Suspects/Owners/Victims

If more than one suspect/owner/victim exists for items being inventoried, a separate property sheet shall be filled out listing the specific items matched to the specific suspect/owner/victim.

1100:2 Items Requiring Special Handling

1100:21 Firearms

All firearms to be property inventoried at the Columbia Heights Police Department shall be unloaded before entering the police facility.

1100:211

If circumstances are such that the firearm cannot be safely unloaded when confiscated, the firearm shall be taken into the armory and unloaded prior to being inventoried.

1100:212

If due to malfunction or unfamiliarity with the firearm in which the firearm cannot be unloaded, the container it is packaged in and the Property Inventory sheet shall be conspicuously marked "LOADED FIREARM", along with a note to the property clerk regarding the loaded firearm.

1100:213

In the handling and unloading of firearms, special attention shall be given to safety and fingerprint evidence on the firearm, magazines, and ammunition.

1100:22 Biohazard Materials

Any item that may contain biohazard material (i.e. blood, body fluids, or any substance that may be potentially hazardous) shall be handled with gloves in a careful manner to ensure the safety of personnel. The container that the suspected biohazard material is packaged in shall be conspicuously marked with **biohazard** stickers, and the Property Inventory sheet shall also reflect the biohazard warning.

1100:221

All items that are received wet, bloody, or containing other body fluids shall be dried in the designated drying area prior to being packaged and placed into property inventory.

1100:2211

The inventorying officer shall lay a double layer of packing paper on the floor of the drying room prior to any items being hung to dry.

1100:2212

This paper is for the collection of any trace evidence that may fall from the items as they dry.

1100:2213

The packaging paper from the floor shall also be property inventoried as evidence when the drying is completed.

1100:2214

The inventorying officer shall prepare a Property Inventory sheet listing those items placed in the drying room, and forward those sheets to the Property Room Technician. The Property Inventory sheet shall reflect the temporary location of the items.

1100:2215

After the item has dried, the Property Room Technician shall inventory and secure the property. The chain of custody must be noted on the property inventory form.

1100:2216

The dried items shall be packaged in paper bags or envelopes. No plastic packaging shall be used.

1100:2217

Each item seized as evidence and dried shall be placed in its own separate package.

1100:2218

The Property Room Technician shall notify the assigned detective when the dried items have been received into the property evidence room. It is the assigned detective's responsibility to see that this evidence is forwarded to the appropriate laboratory for analysis.

1100:23 Flammable and Hazardous Materials

All suspected flammable and hazardous materials shall be stored in the cold storage room (property annex) at the City garage. The original Property Inventory sheet shall list the temporary location of the item(s), and the property sheet shall be forwarded to the property room supervisor.

1100:231

It is the responsibility of the inventorying officer to make arrangements with City garage personnel for the destruction of non-evidentiary flammable and hazardous materials. In the event the City garage is

closed, the inventorying officer shall notify the Property Room Technician of the need for the flammable or hazardous material destruction.

1100:232

It is the responsibility of the assigned detective to arrange for the destruction of all flammable and hazardous materials in evidentiary cases.

1100:24 Perishable Items

All perishable items shall be stored in the refrigerator/freezer located in the property evidence laboratory. The refrigerator shall become the permanent location for these items, and the Property Inventory sheet shall be marked appropriately. The Property Inventory sheet shall then be forwarded to the property room supervisor.

1100:25 Explosives

With the exception of fireworks and ammunition, the Minneapolis Police Department Bomb Squad shall handle any suspected explosives or explosive devices or materials. It is the responsibility of the on shift supervisor to see that establish a safe zone is established and contact the bomb squad.

1100:26 Sharp Items

All sharp items that may puncture the skin shall be protected before being property inventoried into the property room. No syringes shall be property inventoried into the property room.

1100:261

Sharp pointed items and blades shall be enclosed in a plastic tube.

1100:262

Property inventory sheets and the package the item is contained in should be conspicuously labeled of the danger.

1100:263

Syringes that are found in a place where they pose a danger to the public are to be carefully handled and transported to the

Police Department, and immediately disposed of in a Sharps container. It is highly recommended that all officers carry a plastic tube to be used to safely transport syringes.

1100:264

In cases where the syringe is evidence in less than a felony crime, officers shall photograph the syringe where it is found. In cases where the syringe is found in a location where it is not a hazard to the general public (i.e. inside a car, house, motel room) the syringe shall be left where it was found. Officers shall not attempt to replace the cap on an exposed syringe needle.

1100:27 Controlled Substances

All controlled substances (illegal drugs) seized and held as evidence shall be placed in an evidence locker in the property room. The controlled substance shall be analyzed when a suspect is charged with a controlled substance crime. A field test must be completed on the suspected controlled substance, and the unpackaged weight (the weight of only the controlled substance) shall be obtained prior to the controlled substance being property inventoried. Each drug needs to be in its own separate envelope for inventory. (DO NOT package pills with powder, rocks with marijuana, etc.)

1100:271

The inventorying officer is responsible for conducting a field test on the suspected controlled substance. Petty misdemeanor drug charges (i.e. possession of small amount of marijuana) do not need to be field tested unless specifically requested by a prosecutor.

1100:272

The inventorying officer is responsible for obtaining the weight of the suspected controlled substance. This weight is the weight of the suspected controlled substance alone. This shall require the inventorying officer to remove the suspected controlled substance from its

packaging, and weigh only the controlled substance. The inventorying officer shall be aware of the possibility of fingerprint evidence on the packaging and take steps to preserve this evidence as well.

1100:273

The suspected controlled substance shall be removed by the property room technician, and placed in the Department drug locker.

1100:274

The detective assigned to the case is responsible for having the suspected controlled substance analyzed, and maintain as completely and accurately as possible the chain of custody record for each movement and transaction of the suspected controlled substance.

1100:275

In the event live marijuana plants are seized, the marijuana plants shall be thoroughly dried before being packaged in any sealed plastic bags.

1100:28 Money and Jewelry

All money and jewelry of value shall be placed in the drug locker in the Property Room. Money should be transferred to the Finance Department as soon as practicable.

1100:29 Financial Documents and Transaction Cards

All documents (such as checks) and financial transaction cards shall be inventoried into the Property Room.

1100:291

The inventorying officer shall package documents in a plastic bag to protect fingerprint evidence.

1100:292

The inventorying officer shall make photocopies of the documents and financial transaction cards, and the copies

shall accompany any reports to an assigned detective.

1100:293

Checks and financial transaction cards that are recovered or found shall not be returned to the account holder(s). These items shall be destroyed upon the completion of any criminal proceedings. The inventorying officer or assigned detective shall inform the account holder of this, and direct them to notify their bank and/or credit card company.

1100:3 Numbering, Packaging, and Identification

All property taken into custody shall be appropriately numbered, packaged, and tagged.

1100:31 Numbering

Each item of property/evidence inventoried shall be listed in numerical order in the *Item #* column on the Property Inventory sheet. Items cannot be listed as 1a, 1b, etc.

1100:311

Every effort shall be made to list each item of property separate from all other items. Exceptions to this would be a number of similar items that do not have individual identification or serial numbers. The number of the similar items shall be listed in the *Quantity of Item* column corresponding to the appropriate item number.

1100:312

The total number of items shall be the last item number on the last page of the Property Inventory sheets.

1100:32 Packaging

Items may be inventoried into the property room either as is, or packaged in one of the following approved containers:

- Brown grocery bags
- Brown envelopes, either 3" x 6", 5" x 8", or 8 ½" x 11"
- Plastic garbage bag
- Cardboard box if available
- CDs and DVDs should be placed in a CD/DVD case for protection.
- Counterfeit bills should be placed in small white envelopes.

1100:321

Every effort shall be made to place items into appropriate size packages. The weight of the item(s) being property inventoried shall be considered when choosing a packaging material.

1100:322

In cases where there are multiple items to be property inventoried, every effort shall be made to package same-type items together to reduce the number of packages.

1100:323

When packaging property, remember that an item is a single piece of property or a number of similar pieces. A package is a container that can hold a single item or multiple items.

1100:33 Property Inventory Identification

The inventorying officer shall identify all property being inventoried into the property room. Bags, envelopes, or tags pre-stamped with the property inventory identification shall be used to package or tag all property to be inventoried.

1100:331

All items shall be marked with the case number, the date, the item number, and the inventorying officer's name.

1100:332

All packages shall be marked with the case number, the item number(s) the package contains, the inventorying officer's name, the date, and the time of the inventory.

1100:333

All packages shall be sealed with tape, and the inventorying officer shall initial the seal. Staples shall not be used to seal packages.

1100:4 Storage**1100:41 Evidence Lockers**

All packages shall be placed in an evidence locker.

1100:411

All controlled substances, firearms, and all other items considered of value should be temporarily stored inside a locked evidence locker.

1100:42 Secured Garage Storage

Property too large to be placed in an evidence locker shall be stored in the secured garage storage and properly labeled and identified as such on the Property Inventory sheet.

1100:43 Cold Storage Area – City Garage

Inventoried items such as beer kegs or large signs shall be stored in the cold storage area (property annex) at the City garage, and properly labeled and identified as such on the Property Inventory sheet. These items shall not be stored in the police evidence garage.

1100:5 Bicycles**1100:51 Bicycles**

Bicycles shall be tagged with the property identification tag, and the inventorying officer shall place them in the property annex.

1100:512

Bicycles that are found or recovered that have parts missing or are substantially damaged may be taken to the City garage where the finding officer may place the bicycle in the recyclable metal pile or otherwise dispose of it. Property Inventory sheets are not required under these conditions.

1100:6 Refusal of Property/Evidence

The Property Room Technician may refuse to accept any property/evidence that appears to have been altered in any way, any property/evidence that is not the same as described, and any property/evidence that is not packaged correctly.

1100:7 Disposal of Property**1100:71 Homicides, CSC, and Kidnapping
Retain all evidence indefinitely**

- In the case of suspicious, undetermined death, or missing person suspected dead, retain evidence for 6 years, may be destroyed thereafter with consent of prosecutor or detective.
- If the suspect is deceased and there is no expectation anyone else will be charged with the crime, evidence can be disposed of at the discretion of the detective.

**1100:72 General rules for all other felonies
Retain evidence for 6 years****1100:73 Early destruction of evidence**

- Detective or prosecutor's approval required
- Early disposition may be appropriate in the case of bulky items inventoried that were not used to commit the crime.

**1100:74 Exception: No early destruction of
biological or fingerprint evidence of
the suspect's identity**

- Concerning biological material, this exception applies only to the portion of evidence necessary to obtain a sufficient sample for DNA testing.

- It is necessary to document when and how the portion was removed from the item of physical evidence.

1100:75 Special Rule: stolen property (non-contraband)

- At any time, if owner requests return of property, officer may photograph and return property to owner with detective or prosecutor's approval.
- If investigation is complete and there is no one charged, photo property and return to owner with detective or prosecutor's approval.

1100:76 Special Rule: Other personal property (non-contraband)

- If the owner requests return of property, photograph and return to owner with detective or prosecutor's approval.

1100:8 Disposition of Evidence w/ Conviction

1100:81 General Rule: Retain evidence until sentence is expired and appeals process is done

- Expiration includes the sentence and conditional release periods.
- Evidence may be destroyed upon the defendant's death if it occurs before the expiration and there are no other suspects to charge with the crime.

1100:82 Early destruction for a given item of Evidence

Consent of the detective, prosecutor, and court is required for items that have been admitted in court.

- For items **never** admitted in court, the detective or prosecutor may give approval.
- Early disposition may be particularly appropriate in the case of bulky items or organic items that may decompose and create a health hazard.

1100:83 Exception: No early disposal of fingerprint or biological evidence of the suspect's identity is permitted when identity has been in question

- The detective or prosecutor may be consulted to determine if identity was at issue.
- With respect to biological material, this applies only to the portion of evidence necessary to obtain a sample sufficient for DNA testing.
- Officer must document when and how the portion was removed from the item of physical evidence.

1100:84 Special Rule: Stolen property (non-contraband)

- At any time, if the owner requests the return of the property, it may be photographed and returned to the owner with the detective or prosecutor's approval.
- 120 days after sentencing and all appeals, property can be photographed and returned to owner with detective or prosecutor's approval.

1100:85 Special Rule: Other personal property (non-contraband)

- If owner requests return of property, photo and return with detective or prosecutor's approval.

1100:86 Special Rule: Anoka County Court reports

- Property can be released or destroyed if the Anoka County Court web site shows disposition as "closed" for each suspect, either adult or juvenile. **Detective or prosecutor does not need to be contacted.**

1100:9 Disposition of Evidence w/Acquittal

1100:91 General Rule: If no other person will be charged with the crime, evidence may be disposed of at the discretion of the officer with detective or prosecutor's approval.

1100:92 Special Rule: Stolen property (non-contraband)

- If the defendant is acquitted and there are no other suspects, return property to owner.

1100:93 Special Rule: Other personal property (non-contraband)

- If defendant is acquitted and there is no other suspect, return personal property to owner upon request.

BY ORDER OF:

Scott Nadeau, Chief of Police

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1100:10 Disposition of Drug Related Cases

1100:101 Cases charged federally will need to be held for 10 years

- Evidence will be retained until case is completed, and all appeals are done.
- 120 days after sentence is completed and appeals are done, evidence may be disposed of with approval from detective or prosecutor.
- If case is adjudicated, with detective or prosecutor's approval, evidence can be destroyed after a BCA analysis and report are done and photographs are taken.

1100:102 Other state charged cases that have gone into "diversion, or continued for dismissal"

- Evidence must be retained until the case is dismissed by the date determined by the court, the suspect completes or diversion as determined by the court, or with the detective's or prosecutor's approval.